8/4/2015
65th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial
By: Tom Wiknich

Should the city officially support tax increases the state wants to add to our gas and licenses fees?

Tomorrow evening at the city council meeting, they’ll take up a resolution urging the state to provide new sustainable funding for state and local transportation infrastructure and authorization for the mayor to send a letter of support to Ridgecrest district senators and assembly members.

Now, here are the details. The League of California cities is working with a broad coalition to seek support for transportation funding. They are advocating for a package of $6 billion annually for at least ten years with the funding being split between the state and local governments. Our city may see in funding under this concept, though these amounts may change as the governor and legislature ultimately will determine funding levels. The league continues to hear that legislators need to hear directly from their cities and so they are asking the following:

1.  Pass a resolution urging the state to provide new sustainable funding for state and local transportation infrastructure.

2.  Send a letter to your legislators notifying them that your city has passed a resolution and reiterating the seven points that we would like the legislature to adopt.

3.  Join the coalition and encourage your local business groups, chambers and labor groups to join as well.

They are asking cities to act as soon as possible so that legislators will have listed support from their districts when they return to Sacramento from their summer recess on

August 17. In brief, the resolution focuses on seven points that encourages the legislature to adopt:

1. Make a significant investment in transportation infrastructure.

2. Focus on maintaining and rehabilitating the current system.

3. Equal split between state and local projects.

4. Raise revenues across a broad range of options.

5. Invest a portion of diesel tax and/or cap & trade revenue to high-priority goods movement projects.

6. Strong accountability requirements to protect the taxpayers’ investment.

7. Provide consistent annual funding levels.

What does this mean to the people of Ridgecrest?

1.  Some funds would come for road work. But as the initiative says above, the actual amount will be determined by the legislature and the governor.

2.  This is a raise taxes proposal. Period. It’s all a disguised effort to get all of us to support raising our taxes.

The projected numbers for Ridgecrest is $1.3 million. The projected amount for Kern County is $44 million. But there is no guarantee of those funds. There is also nothing in the proposal that requires the state to give us any of the funding by statutory law. They can do whatever they want with the money, which is the same thing they are doing now--spending the funds on everything but roads and infrastructure. Here’s the key wording of the letter, which should get your attention. We support moderate increases in gas and diesel taxes, vehicle registration and license fees, and user charges for non-fossil fuel powered vehicles. Did you catch that? It said the city will officially say: We support increases in gas and diesel taxes, and vehicle registration and license fees. State assemblywoman Shannon Grove and state senator Jean Fuller recently provided statements about this proposal. To paraphrase their comments, they both stated that this is again another trick by the tax and spend liberals in Sacramento. They quietly keep increasing spending on huge entitlement programs, by taking funds from the gas tax and the cap and trade tax. These are funds that are supposed to be spent only on transportation projects, but instead get diverted away from them, as there is no statuary requirement to spend the funds where they are intended to go. Now the liberals cry there just aren’t enough funds for transportation costs. This is after they have diverted them away from those projects. They do this because everyone supports funding to repair roads. So this is a quick and easy ploy to raise taxes, which is really enabling them to fund all their pet projects and entitlement programs.

This is political trickery. If you have any opinion you’d like to voice about our city officially supporting raising taxes, you best plan on attending the meeting Wednesday evening.

And there is nothing in this effort that would require the new funds to only be used for roads and infrastructure repairs. Stay home and say nothing, and you’ll be assumed as supporting higher taxes.

In conclusion; don’t fall for this liberal trick to raise taxes. This is about priorities at the state level. This is about funding the majority’s pet projects and other programs, and ignoring roads on purpose to get you to support another tax increase. Make sure our mayor and council knows your opinion on this.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.